



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

A 738,648

W58

White

A pure... literature

141



General Library

—OF—

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

PRESENTED BY

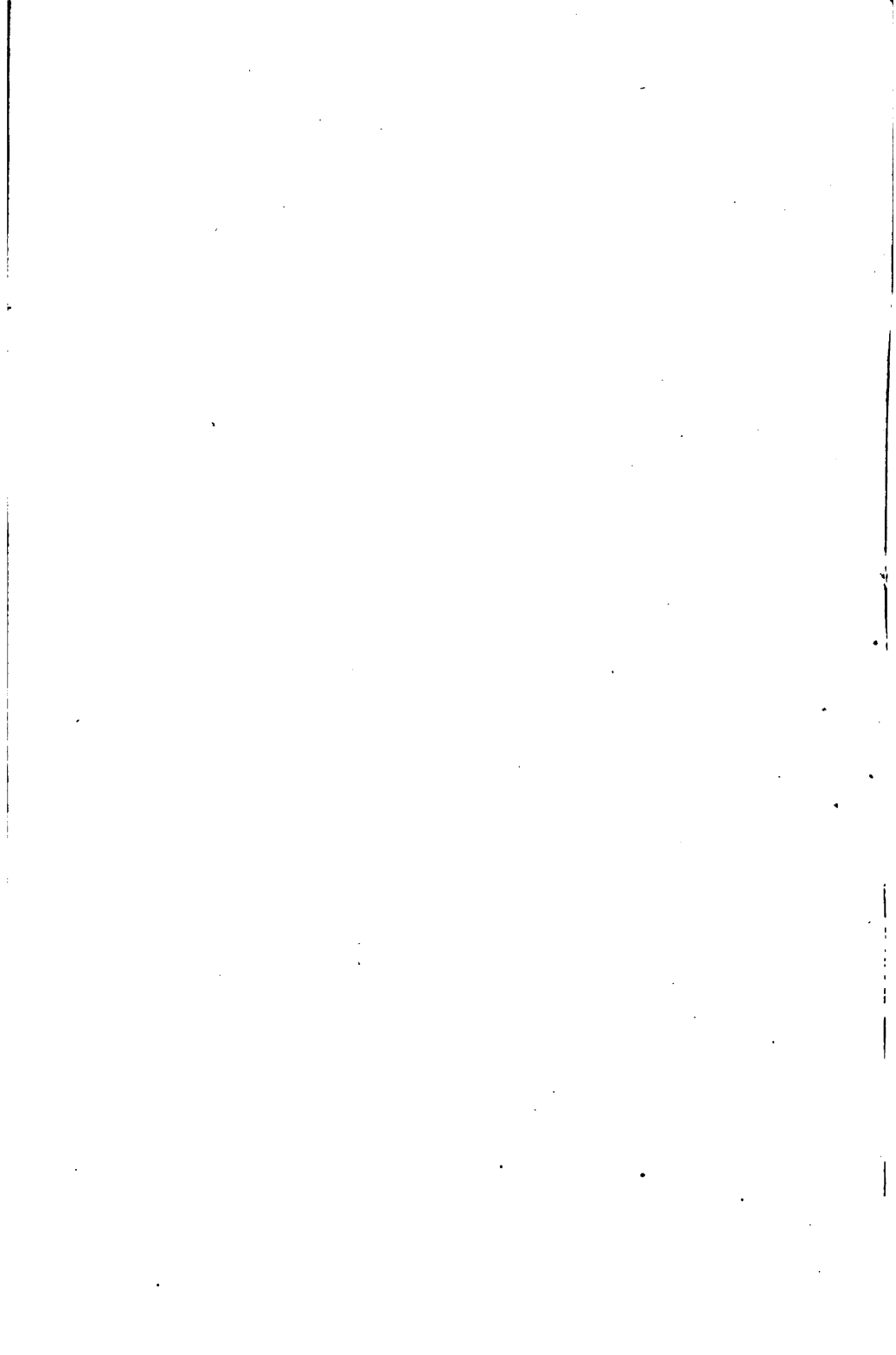
Dr. Frieze

1895-



801

W 58



Form Dr. Frazier's Library
1895

A PURE

71857

AND

SOUND LITERATURE:

A BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS,

DELIVERED JULY 22, 1845.

~~~~~  
BY REV. CHARLES WHITE, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF WABASH COLLEGE.  
~~~~~

INDIANAPOLIS:

PRINTED BY MORRISON & SPANN.

1845.

[illegible]

141 pam Bk

ADDRESS.



BONAPARTE, during his prosperity, kept constantly in view two grand objects which he deemed inseparably connected with each other. One was the glory of France, the other the augmentation of his own colossal power.

Leaving him to judge what constituted national glory and personal power, no man of his age, or any other age, knew better than he how to attain these grand ends of ambition. Among other means, as a favorite one, he projected a superior education for the young sons of the Empire. Special and munificent were the provisions which he made for this object. This was enlightened policy. This was a truly noble scheme. The sagacious projector had too brief a career to feel all its advantages, but France felt them, she feels them now. If she is not sounder in the heart—she is in the head. Her systems of instruction, her science, her literature, her general intelligence, have all been essentially advanced by the wise and vigorous educational arrangements of Napoleon.

In *all* communities, especially in all free nations, young men, if correctly and liberally educated, are by far the most important citizens. They are quickly to be the most efficient patrons, the ablest friends of morals, the safest depositories of power, the strongest assurances of duration, the truest sources of glory.

With a desire to contribute to the right education of those young men connected with this College, I propose to them now a few thoughts on *the value of a sound, pure literature.*

In this discussion polite learning will be left to stand on the basis of its own independent worth, without determining its comparative rank, and without at all disparaging other departments of study.

I. A preliminary consideration, showing the value of a sound, pure literature, is the displacement, which it would effect, of a superficial and corrupt one.

The removal of an evil may be as important a service, as the introduction of a positive good. The extermination of poisonous plants, by cultivation, may be as important a result as a harvest. The drying up a fatal miasma, in recovering low lands, may be even more important than all the subsequent crops which may be yielded. There is a light and vicious literature spread over our country, and even our world, fitly likened to poisonous plants, and to a deadly exhalation, which is to be supplanted and removed by the works of sound and pure writers. This injurious literature comes to us in the shape of pamphlets, monthlies, quarterlies, annuals, novels in twelve and half cent numbers, and sometimes in more imposing volumes.

The first epithet just given to these works light, frivolous, superficial, is sufficient to condemn them. By their levity, their emptiness, their almost vacuity, they enfeeble the intellect of the country essentially and permanently.

Originally, as is well known, the human mind is indolent thoroughly. Without shame it will consent to be put in leading strings, and go whither another's caprice or interest may dictate. Sometimes, more easily still, it will submit to lie passively open, like a common pond between contiguous neighbors, to receive whatever may be thrown in, clean or filthy. A superficial literature encourages this inherent depravity, this inveterate intellectual laziness. It furnishes for the mind occupation but not employment, gives a good supply but no solid growth, produces pleasure but not invigoration, creates a sickly craving, but no healthy appetite. It makes men mere consumers and not producers. As waters passing along an aqueduct, it courses through the intellect without effecting

either enlargement or advantage. It is of course, that the reading which makes little or no demand on the intellectual powers, will exercise and task them into no vigor or invention. There does seem to be at first view some increased magnitude of mind, on the part of the assiduous readers of our light popular works, but it is the fulness of the dropsy. The farther the enlargement proceeds, the greater is the internal disease and debility. These readers are like men breathing a rarified atmosphere, they take in fuller, quicker inspirations, but they pant, they are faint, their lungs collapse! Give them a dense, fresh, vigorous air! Send abroad a rich and solid and manly literature, to recover the intellect of the country from prostration and breathlessness!

The superficial levity of our popular works contributes to depreciate the intellectual character of the country also, by creating a dainty and fastidious taste which unfits for all serious and sober studies. Precisely to the extent that a community is occupied and pleased with light literature, does a hearty disrelish of hard mental application grow up and become invincible. The voracious readers of such a literature forswear all books which demand patient research and intense thought, for the same reason that a child, fed on confectionary, declines plain, solid food, or a sinecure office-holder, the sweating toils of life. Indulgence in light reading will always be at war with all sound scholarship and all great intellectual exertion. As long as men can sit in their easy chairs and be furnished with glass and oyster-shell imitations, they will refuse to dig into quarries, even for the diamond; or to dive to the sea bottom, though it should be to bring up pearls. A vitiated taste, producing disgust with mental industry and profound learning, is at this moment preventing the intellectual attainments, and dwarfing the intellectual stature of the great body of the American people. Industrious minds, of only fair and respectable standing among their contemporaries in the times of Milton and Shakspeare and Johnson, in opulence of thought, certainly surpass even the eminent literary writers of the present age

But levity and emptiness do not constitute the chief objection to the popular productions referred to. Many of them are pernicious decidedly in their moral tendency. So far as they treat of men and the world their first injury is done by presenting life materially overdrawn, unduly successful, joyous and exciting. Readers, fresh from these productions where they have been thrilled and absorbed with ideal beauty, pleasure and splendor, turn and meet the cold realities of the world they live in, with a heart deeply saddened, disgusted, depressed. It is in this state of feverish thirst for stirring and brilliant things and of consequent dissatisfaction with the unexciting incidents and monotonous matter-of-fact duties of real life, that the young abandon the ways of industry and virtue, and repair to vicious society, to the gaming table, to the theatre, to intemperance, to debauchery. But if the scenes, through which the sparkling authors of our light literature lead the young and vicious, be truly the bright and the beautiful, it must be a mistake, we are told, to suppose there is so much danger in the simple fact, that they are imaginary. The result however is, that dazzling the visual organs, by means of the unreal and unattainable, makes the actual scene of our life and labor appear so covered with cheerless gloom, as to settle young buoyant spirits into inefficiency, or drive them off into dissipation and ruin. These authors, however the world may call them delightful enchanters, deserve the appellation of dangerous destroyers.

Many works belonging to our popular literature exert a demoralizing influence, by an extravagant excitement of the passive feelings, at the same time that they totally neglect any exercise of the active virtues. This seriously injures both. It is a well known law of our moral nature, that our passive and our active principles are deteriorated in precisely opposite methods, the former by exercise, the latter by the want of it. Being accustomed to distress, lessens the keenness of our pain on approaching it, and being accustomed to leave it unrelieved, diminishes our aptitude to acts of kindness. Although natural sensibility is blunted and enfeebled by being constant-

ly witness to the miseries of life, yet, if our active nature is put into vigorous exercise in removing them, benevolent principle is so far strengthened by their action, that the aggregate of what is efficiently sympathetic in us, will be rather increased than diminished. But when, by the presentation of fictitious woes, we are thrown into excitement without being thrown into action ; are pained at the evils men suffer, without being prompted to aid in their removal or mitigation, our sensibilities are worn out by familiarity with human affliction, and our active benevolence by neglecting them. Both operations together work a sad depreciation of our moral nature.

There is a large class of works, which inflict deep injury on the character precisely in the method here indicated. They lead us into scenes of unreal distress without asking or receiving from us any personal ministration, and call us to joy over imaginary bliss without moving us to make to it the least contribution of our own, until, to both the actual suffering and substantial weal of men, we become almost as indifferent as men in their graves : until those active principles, which are the spring of all valuable accomplishment, seem too deeply paralyzed ever to wake again. Deliver us from those, who day and night excite their hearts, and lay to sleep their active virtues over sorrow and joy, which, being never experienced, demand no active relief. Too misanthropic, unsympathizing, peevish, selfish, cold, they are for any human companionship, or any valuable influence.

There is one class of works constituting a part of our popular literature, which effects a vitiation of the community, by the exhibition of an audacious, undisguised depravity.

Paul De Kock and Bulwer furnish examples. The former everywhere, the latter not unfrequently introduces his readers to characters and scenes of avowed and open treachery, intemperance and licentiousness. It is the first impression of many persons, that writers, who indulge in the delineation of such professed and unblushing wickedness, will so surely awaken feelings of revolt and disgust, as to become their own antidote ; to banish themselves from all societies refined enough

to read and relish a valuable literature ; and then to push their way into places, where morals are already as low if not some grades lower than their own. Would to Heaven, this were so ; that there were, as some charitably believe there are, such sensitive tendencies to virtue in man, that these foul writers would be sure to meet an indignant repudiation in all cultivated communities. But the humiliating fact is, productions of even unmasked depravity are sought for and read in the high places and low places and middle places of society, and that almost equally. In all these spheres, do they deeply corrupt manners and morals. Having crowded the imagination of excitable, impressible youth full with all vile things, they work their mischief in the simple process of furnishing oil to a flame, or prey to a young lion. They present the very nutrition on which bad propensities in man feed and grow. The vicious appetites are too susceptible and strong, too urgent and clamorous for gratification, to render it ever safe to lay open the scenes and objects which excite them, and which administer to them, however repulsive the development might be to virtuous sensibility.

Good morals are injured by many of our literary writers, in still another and an opposite method. I allude to an indirect and disguised encouragement of bad opinions, bad passions and bad actions. Mischievous as are those unconcealed familiarities with vice, just alluded to ; contaminations, diffused under a mask and a fair profession, are more dangerous and fatal, because unsuspected. There is a portion of our popular reading, which, at the same time that it is making confident pretence to a love and advocacy of truth, purity and honor, is giving unobserved a death wound to them all. The evil, like an infection in the air, is so invisibly disposed in the mass, the unthinking are poisoned, before they are aware of its presence. It lies, under the surface, in the form of a sly insinuation against the divine authority of Christianity ; of a covert sneer at the faith and conscientious strictness of the pious ; of a concealed ridicule of the fastidious carefulness of parents over domestic morals ; of a suppressed contempt for

the proprieties and purities of behavior prescribed by good society. By this mode of writing, while nothing is actually said, everything is communicated. Young readers are unsettled in principles and corrupted in morals, by books containing not one explicit infidel sentiment, nor one open justification of vice.

Authors of this class, who effect their mischief in hidden and indirect methods, often give currency and influence to dissipation and infidelity, by introducing them in company with the blandishments of wealth and family, of fashion and pleasure. Vice, by losing in this association with refinement and splendor, all its grossness, loses to the gay and young more than half its odiousness. It seems even to partake of the attractions, which are made to attend upon it. The inebriate, the seducer, and even the murderer, as introduced to us by our most popular writers, is so gallant, generous, wealthy, gifted and fortunate, as to act far more as a decoy into crime than as a beacon to warn off from destruction. The fallen and the unfortunate, in the works of some authors, although ruined by crime, is described as having fallen almost wholly in consequence of a mere excess of those qualities, which make others angels. That which ruins him, we are assured, is a generosity too generous, a frankness too unsuspecting, a gentleness too mild, an affection too confiding. After they are fallen they are represented as afflicted, and unfortunate, and penitent and meek enough, to have expiated their sin not only, but to have clothed themselves in more charms than they possessed before their delinquency. Who does not see that such innocent, beautiful delinquents will be more pitied than condemned, and, as examples, more imitated than avoided.

In estimating the evil exerted on society, by the impure portion of our popular literature, their influence within the sphere of domestic life, demands a special consideration. There are very few popular writers, who, if they corrupt good morals, leave the relations of the family constitution unimpaired. As these domestic associations are the most permanent, which are ever constituted, and as out of them issue the most pow-

erful and the most desirable influences which society ever feels, an injury inflicted here is capital, lasting, irreparable. It is not mere accident, that the French have no word for home. Domestic ties are too feeble in France; conjugal, parental, filial and fraternal obligations too little regarded, to make homes numerous or well appreciated there. The strong influence of a portion of our popular literature is, to establish French society in this country, to relax the bonds which hold families together in a dear and holy companionship, to make husbands and fathers gallants, wives and mothers partners in intrigues, children pleasure hunters and fashionables, and home a place of discontent, disorder, folly, waste, restlessness and bad passions. Nothing is more to be deprecated than the circulation of works, which have a tendency to act thus on the domestic relations. An evil influence at the homes of a community is like a destruction at the roots of our tree, a poison at the fountains of our waters, a mortification at the seat of our vital organs. If principle and morals are unsound in these holy enclosures, our homes, the best sanctuaries of virtue, are sanctuaries no more; the best walls that defend her, are broken down.

It is not intended by any of these remarks to assert that our corrupt literature is all impurity and evil, without any redeeming qualities. It has many harmless and even valuable attractions. Among others, there is often displayed a grace, sprightliness and eloquence of style, rarely surpassed or equalled. But this very beauty and wealth of language, which add so much to the value of sound, healthy works, only make the impure more dangerous. They serve to soften down the aspect of vices, and give them freer and wider currency. They oftener perhaps divert attention, occupy and absorb the reader, while, almost insensibly, underneath the captivating elegancies, a current of corruption is running directly into his heart, just as a false and impressive display of force will occupy the attention of soldiery, until the enemy unperceived has planted himself in the heart of a city.

Some of the most licentious works, which circulate in the

country, in point of language, never utter a word to offend the most virtuous and sensitive, but maintain in expression the utmost propriety and delicacy. The style, however, is that, which has more than meets the ear. The vilest scenes and objects lie half seen below. The whole imagination, in this way, is crowded and corrupted with the most polluted things, without raising a blush on the cheek of innocence.

Our light and vicious literature is a calm water with slimy reptiles at the bottom. It is a beautiful lawn where biting serpents are stealthily crawling. It is a natural phosphorescence, the evolution of light out of rottenness. It is an array of flowers on a thin, boggy covering; whoever goes after them, falls into inextricable depths below.

The tendency of a multiplication in this country of works of this light and vicious description is matter of just regret and alarm. Whatever philosophers may say of a fixed order in nature, and of an unchanging stability, the world of mind and morals is one of constant transitions. The valuable is always sliding into the useless; the harmless into the noxious; the good into the bad. Polite literature has not escaped this tendency. Its light, unhealthy, pernicious publications, in numbers without number, are now seen coming up over all the country like the locusts of Egypt, borne by a mighty east wind. Happy for us, if there were a counter wind from the Alleghanies, from our Prairies, from the Rocky Mountains, to drive them all back into the sea. They drop down upon the whole surface of the land. The current, that flows over to us, has no ebb and no remission. To look for it to subside, is like sitting down on the bank, to wait for the whole Mississippi river to run by, while the clouds are pouring waters back into its sources faster than they are discharged at its mouth. The best way to stop and turn back a strong current, is to raise up against it, another and a stronger to bear it away. A dam athwart, only raises still higher the waters, to burst away and carry down more surely all our obstructions. The best way to stop the ravages of a hungry army, is not to increase its appetite and thereby its rapacity, by removing provisions, but

by feeding it full with what is better than can be obtained by means of plunder. Our best remedy for the destructive literature, which covers the land, will be the diffusion of a noble and a good one to occupy its place, and to feed the people with knowledge and understanding.

There can be offered to fatigued lawyers, harassed legislators, care-worn merchants, jaded physicians, exhausted students, productions affording both eloquence and truth, vivacity and purity, refreshment and instruction, thrilling interest and intellectual discipline. The general circulation and popularity of these would effect a grand reformation in mind and morals, like the renewal of the face of the world after the desolation of the flood. All pure minded and Christian men of intelligence would most cordially hail the auspicious change.

II. As a farther commendation of a sound and pure literature, to the students of this institution, I proceed to a direct consideration of the wealth and value of that, which has been furnished by the great and good, for the present age.

As the word literature designates, when employed in its popular sense, the more agreeable and graceful exhibitions of human knowledge, to bring any works under this term, except the sound and the pure, would seem almost a perversion. Certainly, nothing but the substantial and the uncorrupt deserves the epithets, agreeable and graceful. As however the light and the solid, the excellent and the vile, are usually clustered together under the general appellation of literary productions, my business now will be, so far as a brief address will permit, to speak of the truly noble, beautiful, useful and solid, which is afforded us in the several species of writing, embraced in popular literature.

1. Among the most sprightly and entertaining of literary works, are Voyages and Travels. These furnish an unusual variety of instruction, attended with an unusual amount of interest. In delineating nature, society, manners, government, religion, the describers are eye-witnesses, and sketch with an instructiveness and truth, a freshness and vivacity belonging to original observers, who make their pencillings on

the spot where they take their observations, and record their impressions in the very presence of the objects which produce them. Voyages and travels of the right character contain a rich collection of natural phenomena. True, travellers and voyagers are not always scientific men, but they are competent to record what actually happens upon the heavens, upon the earth and upon the waters. Their jottings down are a noble treasury of materials for the construction of philosophy, in the true Baconian method.

These traversings of sea and land possess all the stirring incident, all the perilous and strange adventure, all the suspended interest, which, by the most fastidious class of readers, are deemed indispensable in a popular literature. They are never wanting in developments of man as he appears in every nook and corner and continent of the world, in descriptions of curious religious customs, strange opinions, novel states of society. They are never wanting in the richest and grandest scenery. The greater part of it, unmarred by man, wears the beauty and magnificence, left upon it by the original Maker and Builder. Tourists make their accounts of journeys, of countries, and of people, so living, present and real, readers, at once, feel themselves out in the wide world breathing, in company with them, the bracing ocean air, penetrating distant continents, ascending rivers, looking down from mountains, entering the abodes of men, talking in his own cabin, with the Polander, Swiss, African, Indian, Chinese, Hindoo, and Greenlander.

Among the works of this class, which may be considered pure and instructive, at the same time that they are tasteful and interesting, are Lewis and Clarke's Expedition, Irving's Astoria, Parker's Tour, Charlevoix Travels, Poinsett's Notes in Mexico, Humboldt's Travels to the Equatorial Regions, Stephens' Central America and Yucatan, Ulloa's Voyages to South America. These, as they relate to our own country, will be specially interesting to American readers. Among the Voyagers and travellers to other parts of the world, are Anson, Cook, La Perouse, Vancouver, Parry, Ross, Townsend,

Moore, Eustace, Cooper, Bruce, Park, Clapperton, Ellis and Heber.

These authors, as well as numerous others of the same class, are copious with truth, exciting with adventure, vivacious with description, rich with literary embellishment. Possessing gaiety without uselessness, variety without discursiveness, vivacity without levity, detail without tediousness, allurements without temptation, they will be, not only entirely safe to the student, but always a prolific fund of solid instruction and great refreshment.

2. Oratory is another department of literature, which furnishes students with some of the noblest and purest models of taste and intellectual power, to be found in our language. Much of the more brilliant eloquence of every people has been oral, and therefore perished with the occasion which produced it. That, which has been preserved, exhibits a mental energy, a magnanimity of sentiment, and a moral tone, of a very high order. Even when the causes, on which men have spoken, have not been of special impressiveness and importance, by the excitement of opposition, by the collision of mind, by the impulses of an intellectual rivalry, there have been awakened, an original invention, a logical skill and a luxuriance of thought and imagination, which greatly enriched the literature that appropriated them. There are sometimes important conjunctures and interests, which call out higher displays of intellectual power, and furnish nobler contributions to the standard works of the time. It has occurred in deliberative assemblies, that the weal of one fourth part of mankind was suspended upon the result of a single debate. Sometimes, at the bar, the honor and life of an individual, who had concentrated upon himself, the sympathy and the thoughts of an age, has constituted the grand absorbing subject. In our old Continental Congress, under the form of a proposition to separate three millions of colonists from the Mother Country, was agitated the grand and general question, between power and right. And the speakers well understood that, in the decision then to be made, were inter-

ested, directly or remotely, the liberties and privileges of all the civilized, that should afterward dwell on the earth. At that most imposing of human tribunals, the Diet of Worms, composed of church dignitaries, civil functionaries, and crowned heads from the chief courts of Europe, the condemnation or acquittal of Martin Luther was to decide, whether the darkness of the previous thousand years should burst away, and awake a world ; or should brood on, to protract and deepen its long, leaden slumber. On such exciting and vast occasions, the human mind outacts and outsoars itself. Its eloquence assumes a splendor and a power, which surpass all models, precedents and expectations. The passages and volumes, offered to our students by the Bar and the public assembly, are generally written under this unusual excitement of the intellect, and this lofty enthusiasm of the heart. They possess all that superior literary excellence and power, naturally arising from the circumstances of their origin.

The orators, to whose productions the student may be safely referred as models of eloquence, are Chatham, Pitt, Sheridan, Burke, Canning, Brougham, Adams, Quincy, Henry, Ames, Everett, Webster, Clay, Calhoun. These are a few of the more illustrious. A crowd of others rush on the memory, who, like the lesser stars, compose the chief portion of the firmament, and afford unitedly a far greater illumination, than their more dazzling neighbors scattered over the expanse.

The pulpit, also, has used its advantages for an instructive and powerful eloquence. The pulpit stands midway between Heaven and a world revolted. Its appeals are to the strongest passions that stir in man ; its arguments are drawn from three worlds ; its themes are, the immeasurable, the perfect, the eternal ! It is true, we have dull sermons by the thousand, and controversial volumes on matters of theology, by the alcove. It is true, also, that we have sermons and theological discussions of the highest order of composition, of the most brilliant and enduring eloquence. The French Preachers, the most eminent of whom are Bossuet, Fenelon, Bourdaloue, Massillon and Saurin, with their enthusiasm of imagination

and passion—the English, as Atterbury, Leighton, Taylor, Bates, Butler, Baxter, Howe, with their profound learning, elaborate argument and exceeding wealth of thought—the American, as Edwards, Witherspoon, Dwight and Mason, with their practical sense, and direct unshrinking appeals—introduce into the popular reading, of which they are permitted to constitute a part, very important and very noble elements. They infuse a practical instructiveness, a loftiness of morals, an enthusiasm of truth, an earnestness of thought, a vigorous manliness of style, which are indispensable in the right and successful development and formation of the young student.

3. Another species of writing, furnishing productions adapted to improve both the taste and the intellect, is the philosophical. The subject-matters, discoursed of in this class of works, are spread over the ground lying between strict Theology and impracticable Metaphysics. All moral disquisitions, in the unpretending form of dissertations, essays and periodical effusions, belong appropriately to this department of literature. The popular and practical of our treatises on moral and intellectual philosophy, may also, without impropriety, be included.

Although man is the grand object here, as he is directly or indirectly in most literary writings, he is not treated of physically, as countries and climates have moulded him, not historically, as political organizations and influences have presented him, but spiritually and morally. He is treated of in respect to the constitution and phenomena of his whole internal being. This includes the entire mental and moral capabilities, which he possesses; the influence he may receive and exert; the vast interests he may hazard or secure. These philosophical works are occupied with our intellectual and moral relations, our intellectual and moral obligations, our intellectual and moral destinies. They are enriched with observations on life, worth, happiness, and immortality. There is a truly illustrious body of writers on this class of subjects. The Ancients, Plato, Cicero and Seneca; the Moderns, Bacon, Locke,

Paley, Brown, Mackintosh and Abercrombie, have left us philosophical treatises, theoretical and elementary, voluminous and complete.

4. History furnishes a chapter, for the student's literary reading, of highly interesting and important character.

The subject-matters of this species of writing are the origin, character, and progress of the whole human race. History, it is true, becomes less interesting when it carries us to courts, camps, sieges and battle-fields. But the struggles of ambition and the resistance of power, the crowning of kings and the prostration of empires, are things collateral and subsidiary. The grand objects of history, standing high above these, are man, mind, society, government, the methods of Providence with the world, and the methods of the world with Providence.

In order to set before us truly and vividly these great facts, the historian takes us back to the beginning of the world, and then, from the first impulses of passion and of intellect, from the birth of society and government, conducts us down along the whole current of human affairs, and human developments.

History possesses no small amount of interest, from this ancientness alone. We love every thing, that has seen distant times ; that is moss-covered and hoary with the passage of centuries. It derives a much greater attractiveness, however, from its instructiveness. "History," says Cicero, "is the test of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the rule of life, the messenger of antiquity." "It is philosophy," remarks Lord Bacon, "teaching by example." The great teacher of the world, the Bible, employs historical narration very largely, as the vehicle of instruction.

All matters of mind and morals being governed, like the phenomena of nature, by uniform laws, the world that is past will always be, in many important respects, a prototype of the world that is to come. The future will be the past with the additional modification of incidental influences, just as the heavens, imaged in the waters below, are precisely the heavens above, with the added casual motion of the element where

the shadow is embosomed. We need, therefore, to dwell in the past world long and familiarly, in order to know how to live in the present and the future.

History is an extensive table of causes and effects. Or, rather, it is a vast philosophical chamber, where, in order to test all theories and opinions, you witness a grand succession of experiments on man, on society, on government, on education, on morals, on religion. To teach the nature and effects of the various forms of human government, the historian first leads us into the tent of venerable Abraham, and shows us the patriarchal system in actual operation; and then, in order to present us with the model of a Theocracy, makes us the eye-witnesses of the benign results of a government of that sort, under which the descendants of Jacob lived for eight hundred years. As an example of the best possible form and influence of a monarchy, he presents the same remarkable people, under several illustrious and pious kings. So, the Despotisms and Republics of later times, as, also, all other forms of exercising supreme rule, are laid open to us. This is done, not so much by description as representation. We are conducted, in person, to the seats of power, that we may observe, for ourselves, the exercise of authority; and then we are invited to the abodes of the people, that we may be eye-witnesses of the different influences exerted there.

This sage teacher, history, is specially concerned to record, with fulness and accuracy, whatever pertains appropriately to the developments and achievements of the human mind. It loves to carry us along over all the past pathways of the human intellect, but uses special eloquence to detain us at the brilliant literary epochs. At the tenth century, before the Christian era, it calls us to witness the human mind, emerging and bursting in power on the world, in the persons and works of such giant spirits as Homer, Solomon and Isaiah. The display of intellect at this period, is represented to us so remarkable and unprecedented, as to appear like a new and splendid creation, rather than any development of what had before existed. History, with still greater interest, stops us in

Greece, in the time of Pericles, another important literary epoch. As Athens stood pre-eminent, in all that elevated the general community, we are specially invited into this city, and presented there with a panoramic view of the physical, moral and intellectual energies, which characterized that whole classic country. We see despotism crumbling down, and giving place to a free form of government. We visit splendid specimens of art; we hear Plato and Socrates discourse on Philosophy; we go into the Senate and hear the orators, Æschines and Demosthenes, responding to each other, in powerful bursts of eloquence, like thunder-shock answering to thunder-shock, from clouds on opposite mountains. By means of these collected literary exhibitions, we are brought into the presence of the highest mental illumination, at that time, existing on the earth. In holding communion with this concentrated intellect of Greece, we hold communion with the whole literary spirit of an illustrious age. In the same way, history conducts us to Rome, in the time of Augustus, another period of intellectual resurrection and power. There it introduces us to the great and gifted, who would have made that city the mistress of the world, without her generals or her armies. So, also, in all the following centuries, wherever and whenever mind has awoke from sleep, assumed new attitudes, shone out in unusual splendor, and attempted new labors, for the benefit and the elevation of man, there, history has paused with peculiar pleasure, gathered up her richest materials, and written her most eloquent pages.

History has another great and elevated subject. I refer to the true religion, to the part it has acted in the affairs and interests of the world. History marks and records the aspect and form, which this divine agency has assumed, and the changes, it has wrought in each nation and age, where it has been allowed to exist. Describing it as the grand, modifying and conservative principle of human society, as the original author of civilization, of peace, of human progress, of permanent amelioration, of happiness; history enlivens and enno-

bles many of its chapters, by a faithful representation of its elevating tendencies and holy achievements.

Such being the noble objects and themes of history, if well written, it must always be richly fraught with the most interesting matters of instruction, with the most solid and dignified eloquence.

In historical works, the ancients are deservedly considered eminent. Two brilliant periods of man, the one of Augustus, at Rome, the other of Pericles, at Athens, have been peculiarly fortunate in their historians. The elegant Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and the classical Sallust, Cæsar, Livy and Tacitus, have ever been standard authors. With the exception of Xenophon, a part of whose works is more historical romance, than authentic narrative, these authors have left us accurate and faithful history. Owing to the fact, that they describe society and government in their nobler forms, individual character in its better attributes, and the human intellect in its loftier aims and accomplishments, these works, beside being a treasury of truth, are replete with beauty and eloquence. The compression and energy of some of them, the fascinating narration and picturesque description of others, the terseness, graphic sketches of character, and great simplicity of them all, render them rich and invaluable to the student, who loves pure and solid literature.

If to these we add the eminent historical productions of later times, we have an array of practical wisdom, and attractive eloquence, not surpassed in any department of letters. A few of the modern standard works of history, are those of Rollin, Mitford, Gibbon, Hume, Russell, Clarendon, Robertson, Mosheim. There are also Hallam's *Middle Ages*, Napier's history of the *Peninsular War*, Sismondi's history of *France and Italy*, Moore's history of *Ireland*, Scott's *Napoleon*, Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella*, Irving's *Columbus*, Burke's *Settlements in America*, Marshall's *Life of Washington*, Botta's *War of Independence*, Graham's, Pitkin's and Bancroft's history of the *United States*.

The chaste and elevated qualities of style, together with

the solid materials of thought and wisdom, to be found in these histories, and in histories like these, leave the student nothing to desire. They stereotype the whole face of past centuries, and then unroll before him the splendid chart, for his study and entertainment. If the ocean had preserved the traces of every prosperous passage over its bosom, if it had retained the gurgling of its waters over every spot, where a vessel went down, held a broken spar or ship-fragment upon every rock and sand-bank, where one was split or stranded, it would be an image of the palpable, important, and impressive instruction, presented to us by faithful, graphic history.

5. A source of the elegant and the valuable in literature, more prolific than any of those which have been mentioned, is Poetry.

No part of polite learning is more liable to be undervalued than poetry. Some have looked upon it as a fairy, that lives on the breath of flowers, walks the invisible air, presides over night-dreams, and day-dreams, quite as unsubstantial. Others, though they have regarded it as possessing somewhat more of the actual and substantial, have yet looked upon it as a mere embellishment, like an architectural ornament, a cornice or a frieze, beautiful, indeed, but contributing nothing to durability or usefulness. It is very true, that poetry has much of the pleasing and graceful, so is it true that it has no lack of the good and useful. If trees may be an image of it, it is their rich foliage, their noble, beautiful forms, and their clustering fruit. If the seasons may be, it is the harvest time of the year, the good time of ripeness, of cheer and of plenty. Thus, Poetry blends the graceful with the important, the pleasing with the useful. Poetical productions occupy the same place in the works of mind, which the constellations do in the heavens. They constitute the bright places, which catch the eye and put the heart into a rapture. And then, in addition, they perform great and valuable services, just as these clustered stars, besides contributing their beauty and brilliancy, perform each the solid labor of warming and conducting a family of worlds.

Certainly, there are no productions of the mind, which are more redolent of instruction, which are fraught with higher invention or greater power. Indeed, when the intellectual powers are nerved to their highest point of action, and the moral spirit is pervaded by its loftiest and purest enthusiasm, the creations are always substantially poetical. Though the accuracy of metrical numbers be not preserved, the grand elements of the richest poetry will be present. If this be so, if the essential character of poetry be, that it is the language of our higher conceptions, and nobler feelings, then this part of our literature, possessed of the superadded advantages of its elegant graces, should be turned to by students, as affording invaluable models of taste and instructive eloquence. The best poetry has a concentration, and point, and graphicness, and imagery, which give it a vast effectiveness, as well as an unusual brilliancy.

One cluster of writers, who do great honor to this department of literature, embraces, among others, Addison, Collins, Gray, Goldsmith, Beattie, Cowper, Burns, Campbell, Rogers, Crabbe, Southey, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Pollock, Hemans, Percival, Bryant. The best thoughts, and the best feelings, which our language embodies and bears abroad to men, are to be found in the works of these authors. The student of these poets finds himself among those, who never speak without furnishing him needed instruction, without stirring his sympathies, without cheering and delighting his meditations. They are not so brilliant as to dazzle, nor so undorned as to be left unread; not so high as to be invisible, nor so low as to make his communion with them depressing. They swell and enrich all the channels of noble thought, and of pure and generous feeling.

We have a few writers of poetry, of still higher rank. Among them are, Shakspeare, Milton, Pope and Young. The first two know no superiors in giant power of mind. The two others, though of lower grade, also possess a high order of intellect. These men open to us a field of greater elevation and wealth of thought, than is done by any equal number

of writers, in the whole circle of English authorship. And these authors, of such intellectual magnitude, also stand unrivalled in poetical grace and beauty. Light and feeble works are rather injured than benefited by embellishment. Like the illumination of vapor, they are made thereby to appear still more unsubstantial. But the elegance and brilliancy, belonging to the productions of these master minds, like sunset glories on lofty mountain ranges, make the vastness and height underneath, to appear in more grandeur, more strength, more majesty.

The subjects of poetry are, in themselves, of great dignity and interest, and assist to give to this department of literature its superior elevation and gracefulness.

Poetry wholly refuses to lend her language and imagery to embellish and diffuse, either moral corruptions or poisonous opinions. Rhyme and measure, it is admitted, may be thus prostituted. But poetry, the true "*ars divina*," is outraged by such a connection. It is no more divine. Its power is crushed. Its loftiness is laid low. It is an eagle brought down from its glorious pathway to the sun, and made to walk, a grovelling thing, in the dust. Poetry consents to embody only the pure, the true, the beautiful, the noble. These qualities it finds largely distributed in the external world. Accordingly, one of its favorite themes is nature. Where ever, in his works, God has been unusually munificent; where ever, as in some valley, sleeping between two opened hill ranges, he has thrown together, in profusion, almost every refreshing, picturesque and beautiful object; where ever he has planted grand forests, piled up mountains, cut mountain gorges, poured inland seas over precipices, or, in the space above, clustered and hung out worlds; there, poetry finds the choicest subjects of her pencil; there, gifted to discover charms not seen by others, she catches a high and unappreciated inspiration. She appears invested with the native grace, the simple grandeur belonging to the objects, which she loves and transcribes.

Human society presents valuable themes for poetry. The purity and truth, the affection and confidence, the gentleness

and peace, the charity and happiness to be found in domestic scenes; the artlessness of nature, the contentment of few desires, the action of moral principle, the progress of civilization, to be found in larger communities—these constitute the subjects of our most amiable, graceful and instructive poetical writers.

Man, in his own construction, is a poetical theme of transcendent interest. Great intellect and exalted virtue are far more consonant to the spirit and office of poetry, than any thing to be found in nature. The capacities of man to make approaches to the Divinity, his intellectual and moral aspirations and actual advances, after the great, the perfect, the infinite, are subjects which lift poetry to that sublime sphere where she manifests her highest power. Not satisfied with any general representation of the greatness of our nature and our possible accomplishments, poetry loves to pause on individual gifts, individual designs of magnanimity, individual acts of self-sacrificing virtue. As high motives and lessons, she loves to commit them to immortality.

Whether, therefore, we consider its great and attractive themes, or its own lofty nature, poetry may be affirmed to offer to the literary taste of the student, a gracefulness of form, an opulence of thought, a beauty of imagery and eloquence, which he will look in vain to find exceeded, through all the productions of the human mind. Our best poetry being, like good angels, the fairest, noblest, outward form of truth, virtue and glory, I cannot too strongly assure our scholars of the safety and advantage of dwelling long and familiarly on these noble works, making them specially the welcome and vivacious companions of all their leisure hours.

The literature, which has now been referred to, as capable of being drawn from the several departments of Voyages and Travels, Oratory, Philosophy, History and Poetry, is truly a valuable and a splendid one. It does not, indeed, as nothing human can, come up to our "beau ideal" of a collection of elegant and instructive works for our students, and for our country, but high excellences it certainly possesses. It is

here proposed, with great confidence, as a grand and invaluable substitute for the light and vicious reading, now so popular and prevalent.

I am fully aware of the fact, that not only the literature first described, which I have condemned, but even this last, that I have commended as solid and instructive, the best which we possess, is, by some, deemed light and superficial, and held, on that account, in low estimation. These persons, among whom are included some of the judicious and learned, if they do not wholly discard polite learning, regard it as a mere grace, rather than a real good, a showy appearance, rather than a valuable substance, a temporary gratification, rather than a solid advantage. With these impressions, as was to be expected, they have looked upon the pursuits of literature as scarcely worthy of sound, manly, scientific minds.

It is well that there are men of this description. They have some truth and reason on their side. It is not without its utility, that they should forever point us, as they do, to the exact sciences, to the mathematics and natural philosophy, and then earnestly assure us, that these are the foundation and the frame-work—the only things important to make a man. Foundation and frame-work are essential, truly, but these are not all that is valuable. What would a village of foundations and naked timbers be? And, what would be a community of men, who were mere frame-work, gaunt skeletons! Cover the houses! finish them within, surround them with shade, and water, and garden and orchard! Clothe these ghastly skeletons! fill them out, and round them off with suiting material, shape them into grace and comeliness, accustom them to the civilities and gentleness of polished life. This is the literature of the matter. This is the practical, and useful, and beautiful, of man and his arrangements.

It is well that there are those, who can go out into a grand forest of pines and oaks, and think of nothing but masts and ribs for ships; and others who can pass down our valleys and rivers, interested only to look at mill-seats, facilities for

slack-water navigation, and passages to push canals and railroads. But such scenery, to another order of minds, is a feeling, and a voice, and a blessed teaching, and acts on the inward spirit, to soothe, to soften, to lift it heavenward. It is to them an impressive literature—it is to them nature, in the character of a language full of high lessons and inspirations. The visible world, no doubt, was intended thus to speak to man, to speak to him attractively.

It is well that there are others, who can travel among mountain heights, out from whose rattling crags “leaps the live thunder ;” interested only to inquire for elevations in feet and inches, to ascertain whether the rocks are granite or pudding-stone, or to settle a question of coal or chalybeate formation. But there is more in these scenes, vastly more, than mere objects of dry, arithmetical inquiry. There is a glorious, ever-speaking literature. Mountains, “ye are wondrous strong ;” in your broken grandeur ye do discourse high eloquence. Ye speak intelligibly the attributes of your divine author ! Ye lift up the spirit of man to the great Eternal !

Well is it that there is still another class of persons, who can go out under our firmament, and, by telescope, ascend up among and beyond its worlds, and yet have nothing to talk of but parallax, azimuth, perigee or aphelion. Glorious stars ! They are the poetry of heaven ! Hung on the vestibule to light the way, with silent eloquence they point all the just to their holy rest. As a type and symbol of the glories within the heavenly world itself, their words are unto the end of the world. Beautiful expanse of stars ! Shine upon us ! Ye seem the benignant light of Jehovah’s countenance, most intelligibly attracting us to reverence and devotion. Such is the literature of the heavens ; day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge.

It is well that there are persons of a still stranger description, who can look on man, bearing the impress of God, and holding in his hand an invitation to dwell in the presence of the eternal throne in heaven, and then set themselves down, as mere political economists, to dry calculations as to his capa-

ble labor and proper wages, his expense and profit, his consumption and production. Man, reasoning, gifted, enjoying, immortal! He holds and directs the lightning, weighs the planets, measures the stars, aspires after the infinite, walks with God. Here, in this higher sphere, where he appears as a thinking, feeling, growing, worshipping, God-like spirit, is presented the literature of man—of his powers, accomplishments and destiny. Certainly this last view of him possesses by far the most dignified and commanding interest.

These brief allusions to the office and sphere of literature, in contrast with those of the sciences, may show how easily its claim to the regard and study of scholars may be established. I do not desire that the sciences be depreciated. Important and indispensable they are to the practical arts of life, and also to intellectual discipline. I only urge that polite learning, when sound and instructive, be highly valued and honored as it most richly deserves.

III. I proceed to make a brief reference to the *influence* of a pure and solid literature.

The character of such a literature just given, as presenting nature in her most attractive and elegant aspects, and man in his noblest capacities, well-being and end, would lead us to expect from it important effects, both in matters of intellect and morals.

It is highly influential in the business of education. As a relaxation merely from severer studies, it is important to students in every stage of their pursuit of knowledge. It leaves them with added freshness and energy, for matters more elementary, fundamental and abstract.

It is the study and love of such a literature, which, more than any thing else, gives men the proper command and practical use of their own acquisitions and moral powers. The love and study of it, are on this account, positively essential to success in all those positions in society, where personal knowledge and personal emotions must have expression and publicity, in order to have power. Men may be profoundly wise in jurisprudence, deeply read in ethics, unequalled in

their knowledge of political economy and legislation ; but if, through deficiency in literary taste and literary acquisitions, they are deficient in ability to bring out and forth their materials, in forms of power and eloquence, they are feeble advocates, dull preachers, inefficient legislators. The monuments of Egypt have, for ages, been covered all over with learning, but, until they found recently an interpretation and a voice, the world was no better or wiser for their inscriptions. Our wise men, with no appropriate utterance and eloquence, with no impressive forms and intelligible embodiment of what is within them, are undeciphered, unspeaking obelisks or pyramids. To those who are to act upon mankind by communication of their own emotions and intellections, good literary attainments and taste subserve the same purpose as weapons do to the army, or ordnance to the navy. They are the instruments, by which their power is felt and feared.

There is another influence, of a rich, sound literature, when widely diffused and received, directly on the mass of the community. This cannot be easily over-estimated or over-stated. It awakens slumbering intellect. It arouses paralyzed moral energies. It educates, most efficiently and usefully educates, both the general mind and the general heart. When used by the gifted minds of a people, to inculcate important principles of government, to form a right public opinion, to give useful direction to public affairs, to construct a noble, national character, literature shows an immense power over the mental and moral elements of human society. Thus wielded, it holds an influence, which no arm of war and no kingly authority are able to exert. The history of China records twenty-two dynasties, and more than two hundred and fifty kings, but five distinguished literary lights, like Confucius, would have done more for the people of the celestial empire, than all of them together. It was not the Magna Charta, ratified by king John, that stopped royal encroachment, broke royal oppression, and made British subjects so nobly free. That was the achievement of aroused British intellect, acting on the country in its own favorite forms, of persuasion and power.

A literature, that breathed the spirit of the times, created for the occasion, called on the people to assert their rights, and to enjoy them, in defiance of the frown of the aristocracy, or the will of the throne. The appeal was irresistible ! It was not the celebrated declaration of the year seventy-six, nor any mere skill and bravery in arms, afterward, which made this country what it has become. What we *were* before ; what we were, intellectually and morally, embodied and published abroad, originated the declaration, and achieved the triumph in the succeeding protracted struggle. It was in the field of intellect ; it was on the arena of principle, that the grand contest occurred. It was then, that new doctrines of government, of human right, of liberty of conscience, of religious obligation, in the imposing form of a revolutionary literature, won our victories, and secured our great privileges and honors. Not physical power, but a pure and noble literature, in the hands of superior minds, moulds human character, and directs human affairs.

A sound and healthy literature has a more extended action still. It exerts an influence, widely beyond the people and the time which gave it birth.

As literature is the intellectual and moral spirit of man, speaking, holding communication with its contemporaries, the whole influence of it depends on intellectual and moral sympathy ; on the ultimate law, that heart acts on heart, and mind on mind, with great readiness and invariable certainty. The world having nothing isolated, the spirit of man being linked with the spirit of man, intimately and universally, the mental and moral movement of an individual, according to the law referred to, communicates itself on every side ; recipients become, in succession, conveyors of impulse, and thus the influence goes on endlessly. We have an illustration in point, in the science of astronomy. When a number of masses of matter are well balanced around a great attracting centre, if there be introduced a new body, every other receives an impulse and a movement from its place, passes on in a new orbit, and in an altered velocity. So, when, in the

system of minds, a new book, a new speech, a new truth, a new aspiration, a new mental or moral act, of any description, is introduced, there is an influence, a movement, a displacement, a new adjustment throughout a vast field of intellect. We have an illustration of this same thing, in that familiar law of nature, the equality of action and re-action. Each drop of water and each particle of air, when moved, moves equally each drop and particle around it. The same is true of more solid substances. In respect to all matter whatever, impulse that is received, is communicated to contiguous bodies. These last transmit the same to more masses, these to more still, in ever-widening succession. And philosophy does not allow us to believe the influence ceases, till we reach the confines of the material universe. It assures us, "that the momentary waves, raised by the passing breeze, apparently born but to die on the spot that saw their birth, leave behind them an endless progeny, which, reviving in other seas and visiting a thousand shores, will pursue their ceaseless course, till ocean itself be annihilated; that the track of every canoe, every vessel, remains forever registered, in the movement of all succeeding particles, which may occupy its place—the furrow made is, indeed, instantly filled up by the closing waters, but they draw after them other and larger portions, and these larger portions still, in endless succession. So, likewise, philosophy teaches, that the pulsations of the air, set in motion by the human voice, communicate themselves to columns of atmosphere next beyond them, in succession, until the waves, thus raised, pass around the earth, and then around again, and thus the element we are breathing becomes a vast library, on whose pages are written all that man has spoken." Minds move more easily among themselves than particles of matter, far more readily receive and communicate successive impulses. Heart throbs to heart, thought wakes to thought, mind kindles to mind, with a quickness, a certainty and a power, as much superior to what occurs under the eye of the natural philosopher, as intelligent mind is nobler in its elements and capabilities, than dull,

senseless matter. There shall come a message to our shores, that the descendants of the noble, classical Greeks, are making a last death-struggle against the oppressor, and scarcely will it be read, before a warm, contagious sympathy will begin to appear. Soon, in the large cities, public meetings will be held on the subject. Then the pulpits will catch the general feeling. The theatres and operas will give the heroic sufferers a benefit. The streets, and public houses, and markets, and parks, will take up the absorbing theme. Contributions, at appointed places, will pour in ; high-spirited young men will put on arms, and set sail for the scene of conflict. A wave of enthusiasm will pass backward, from the coast, into the country, ride over the Alleghanies, and move on, till it reaches the extreme boundary of population. One deep, thrilling sympathy pervades the whole land. Thus, a movement of intellect, or emotion, anywhere, easily becomes a movement everywhere. He that rises to make a speech, makes it to the whole civilized portion of mankind, now living, or hereafter to live, on the earth. All could not hear the orator's voice, but the thoughts and heart-thrills of those who did hear it, are communicated, received, transmitted, outspread, till they reach all, who are sufficiently emerged from barbarism to appreciate them. He, who writes a book, writes it, not for one age and one nation ; he writes it for the family of man. Every record of history, every line of poetry, every doctrine of philosophy, every passage of oratory, every announcement of religion, is the beginning of a series of influences, to be limited only by the boundary of created being. The universe seems like one vast whispering-gallery to carry all the utterances of mind throughout its immensity.

A literature of such a description as that, which has been here commended, rich, healthful, elevated, diffusive, powerful, should have no rival, for a moment, in the hearts of our scholars, and men of intelligence. Be it so, that our superficial, popular literature comes with many earnest pretensions to superiority of style, imagery and description ; with many warm professions of desire to encourage innocence and vir-

tue ; its effect, intellectually, I do still insist, is, like that of the hydrocephalus, an enlargement of the head, but a paralysis of the intellectual organ ; and, morally, like that of the consumption, hallucination and confidence, but a sure wasting of the vital organs. Through the influence of the soundly educated portion of the community, the whole should be repudiated and removed ; our schools and colleges, reading-rooms and families, be thoroughly cleansed out ; and then, pure and instructive works be invited forward, to pour their tide of truth and eloquence into all these places of literary reading, taste and influence. I invoke scholars, professional men, men of literary leisure, literary writers, book publishers—all the good character and all the active talent of the country I invoke, in behalf of this great and important reformation in our popular literature.

Such a literary regeneration would constitute an era of mind—the way-mark of an age. It would be a high honor and a great glory. Our country ought to earn this honor. Most nobly would this glory befit her. That will be a proud day for us, when, not armies and navies, territory and wealth, but the writings of the great and pure, shall be the chief depositories of our power, and the most valuable materials of our greatness.

It remains, that I take my leave of the class, who now finish their course at this institution.

Young gentlemen, we have loved your sojourn with us, we would willingly prolong it. But your duty calls you, and you must leave us for other scenes. You will not leave us, however, to seek for seclusion and inglorious ease. You will perceive the young intellect of the country, although originally more susceptible and energetic than that of any other people, by means of an unsound, superficial, insignificant literature, mis-employed, deteriorated, paralyzed. You will perceive the young heart of the country, capable, in a degree unequalled, of a generous enthusiasm in behalf of all that is magnanimous and good, deeply corrupted by the same class of works. You will see how this intellectual and moral depreciation, is

